

N. Belfast

12 FEB 2002

Feb Res. file
(24)

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02/12/02 12:44 PM

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Subject: North Belfast

Please find attached a brief note reviewing the position on Glenbryn/Ardoyne. This may be helpful for our meeting at 3pm today.



Review of position at 12 February.d

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Review of position at 12 February.

The key issue is the development of the Alliance Avenue/Ardoyne Rd intersection. This was proposed by OFMDFM as a mechanism that would simultaneously address community safety, improve traffic management and enhance the overall look of this disputed interface. Underlying these aims was the objective of giving both communities an opportunity to discuss the proposal on a cross community basis.

It is impossible to make progress on this project if either or both sides is intent on using it to push various wider issues. Some of the issues that have emerged in this context include:

Glenbryn/Upper Ardoyne	Ardoyne
To mark territory and thwart possible encroachment.	To force cross community talks with Ardoyne
As a reward for ending the school protest entirely.	As punishment for the HC school protest
To reduce access to the school by parents.	Reaction to/concern about wider attacks on Catholics.
To mark a victory over nationalists.	To avoid territorial constraints on meeting local housing demand
To avoid linkage with Loyal Order parades.	Emphasising equality for Catholics

It will be impossible to make progress on the development if we cannot acquire land in Everton. It will also be impossible to proceed without a common position within OFMDFM.

There is a chance – perhaps a slim one – if we could focus solely on the design AND secure the land AND sort out the position within OFMDFM, that we could implement the CRUA (Option 4) design. Crucially this would depend on Ardoyne accepting the logic of the design and securing their agreement to it. However if the CRUA design is construed as a threat to the continued existence of HC Primary School, we will not get Ardoyne agreement.

As things stand at the moment, the most likely outcome of consultation with Ardoyne is an alternative to the CRUA design, perhaps focussed on a roundabout instead of a bend. The wall in the CRUA design extends along the pavement and although it does not entirely block sight lines up towards the school, it is seen as a particular sticking point by many of the parents. Somehow the roundabout option seems less of a threat to the school.

It is also suggested that we may have an option to force implementation of the CRUA design over the objections of Ardoyne, provided we do not find those objections to be either valid or reasonable. This scenario – which assumes we can both secure the land in Everton and get the support of our Ministers – seems to me to be very unlikely.

Derek Wheeler